

Consisting substantially of 286 gnomic articulations of vivacious quiddity plus 13 ontological inquisitions into myth's affinity to mind and body, *Divastigations*, minus its prolusory avant-propos, totals, in short, 299 of what your thrilling narratrix Ouida Willoughby Johnson calls ludicts: "tragiplayful stagings of [an] inability to mark with my will this blank world." Individually, all 286 of said gnomic articulations — topically ranging within a narrow stylistic compass from a laconic triphrasal invocation of childhood's conclusion to a lyrical plagiary of sapphic lust to a trio of loquacious divagations on a fusty translation of a lost Ural-Altaic chanson by a Poldavian ambassador to Babur's court in Kabul — start out with what you'll soon affirm as our prodigal protagonist's signal flailing away at possibility's construction: "And should I...?" By contrast, Ouida's 13 ontological stabs at a "schizomythology of ritual" vary significantly in both aim and form. That is, if our majority of 286 liminal ludicts constrains, by way of discontiguous, loxodromic cuts through sin and symptom, a rhythmically soulful pursuit of a nautch girl's transformation from child to woman, our minority of 13 insular ludicts prosaically charts various bouts of cortical dissociation that stun Ouida into rhapsodic fabulation during actual acts of promiscuous carnality, a prototypical triad of which follows: sociolinguistic contribution to a scholarly publication; pornographic film production of a lost "sociophysiological" play; boarding-school instar of a "small tri-monthly multilingual journal of arts, writing, philosophy, natural history, and sundry cultural stuff." Such manifold ludicts, without a doubt, will focus your mind on Ouida's bawdy transactions; indubitably, too, a handy bookmap is bound to assist your ocular roving of Ouida's wanton labyrinth. And if at last you find your way out at Ouida's caustic swansong to things forlorn, a synoptic atlas should charm you back in again via an orismological unspooling of topics, authors, locations, works, and whatnot hiving panmictically within and throughout this ovular body of words known as *Divastigations*.

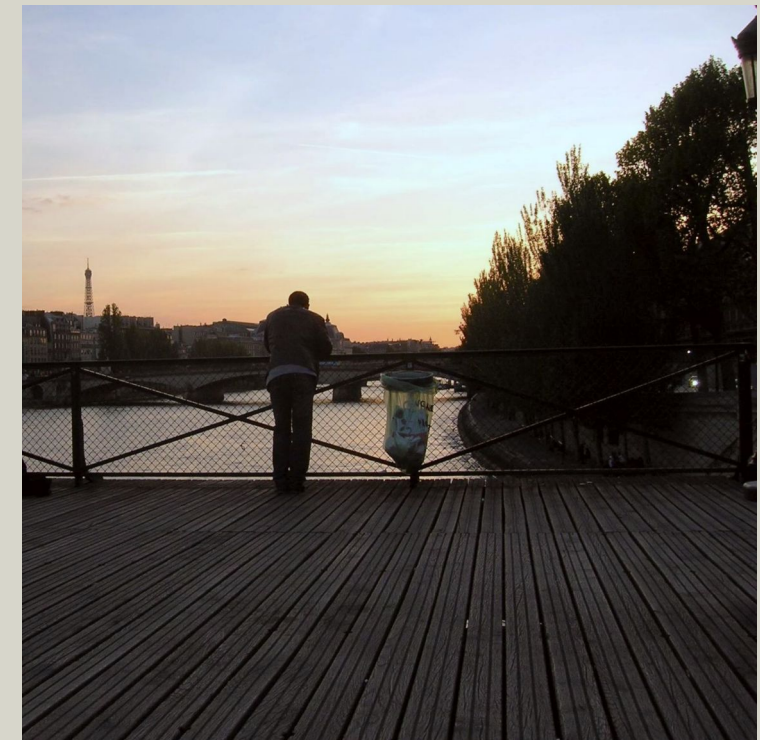
— C. Kidjaki and A. Raymond, "That trauma's plot may sing: A short account of Ouida's *Ludicts*," *JSocPhys* 17(3), March 2010

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Divastigations



Towards a Schizomythology of Ritual

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